

Health and wellness tips for your work and life.

Presented by
Dan Lawrie Insurance Brokers



4 Health Tips for Laptop Usage

Prolonged laptop use—the kind of use that often occurs in the home and workplace—can lead to eyestrain, muscle and joint pain, and shoulder, arm, wrist and hand injuries. Thankfully, there are a number of precautions you can take in order to use computers safely, including the following:

1. Use a full-sized keyboard and mouse whenever possible. Simply attach these devices to your laptop and position them appropriately.
2. Prop the laptop up so that the screen is level with your eyes. This will help you avoid constantly hunching your back or looking down.
3. Maintain an arm's length distance between the screen and your eyes to avoid eyestrain.
4. Take short breaks and stretch every 20 to 30 minutes to allow your body to recover from any strains.

How Much Caffeine is Too Much?

Classified as a psychoactive drug, caffeine is a bitter substance found in coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, some nuts and certain medicines. It has many effects on the body's metabolism, including stimulation of the central nervous system. It can make one feel more alert and give a boost of energy.

For most people, the amount of caffeine they consume each day is not harmful. However, too much of it can make one feel restless, anxious and irritable. It may also prevent a good night's sleep and cause headaches and abnormal heart rhythms. Furthermore, if heavy caffeine use stops, it can cause withdrawal symptoms. Certain circumstances call for reducing the amount of caffeine you consume, including the following:

- You consume unhealthy amounts of caffeine each day, more than 500 to 600 milligrams. This is about four cups of coffee.
- You experience caffeine sensitivity symptoms, including anxiety, fatigue and headaches.
- You're not sleeping well.

Caffeine can be habit-forming, so any attempts to stop or lessen the amount you consume can be challenging. It's important to know how much caffeine is in the foods and beverages you consume and to gradually reduce the amount of caffeine you take in. Try replacing caffeinated coffee, tea and soft drinks with their decaffeinated counterparts.



**DAN LAWRIE
INSURANCE BROKERS**

LAWRIE INSURANCE GROUP INC.

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TOASTED BARLEY AND WILD RICE SALAD

- 125 mL (½ cup) each pot barley and wild rice
- 250 mL (1 cup) sodium-reduced vegetable or chicken broth
- 250 mL (1 cup) water
- 1 orange or yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 1 tomato, diced
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) cider or white wine vinegar
- 15 mL (1 tbsp) Dijon mustard
- 10 mL (2 tsp) canola oil
- 1 small clove garlic, finely grated
- Pinch fresh ground pepper
- 375 mL (1 ½ cups) chopped cooked turkey or chicken (about 180 g/6 oz)
- 60 mL (¼ cup) each chopped fresh parsley and chives

PREPARATIONS

1. In a saucepan, toast barley and wild rice over medium heat, stirring for 3 minutes. Add broth and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook for about 30 minutes or until barley and rice are tender but still chewy and firm. Remove from heat and let cool slightly.
2. In a large bowl, combine cooled barley-rice mixture with bell pepper, zucchini and tomato.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard, oil, garlic and pepper. Drizzle over top of barley-rice mixture and stir to coat. Stir in turkey, parsley and chives until well distributed.

Makes: 6 servings

Nutritional Information (per serving)

| | |
|----------------|------|
| Total Calories | 194 |
| Total Fat | 4 g |
| Protein | 12 g |
| Carbohydrates | 29 g |
| Dietary Fibre | 5 g |
| Saturated Fat | 1 g |
| Total Sugars | 2 g |

Source: Government of Canada

The Hidden Costs of Unhealthy Eating

It's a common misconception that eating healthy is inherently more expensive. While junk food may be less expensive in some instances, there are a number of troubling hidden costs of eating unhealthy to be aware of, including the following:

- An unhealthy diet can have a number of immediate, negative health effects. Stress, fatigue and depression are just some drawbacks of unhealthy eating. These symptoms can make you less productive, which, in turn, could affect your work performance.
- Eating processed foods and foods with high amounts of sugar, sodium and fat can contribute to a variety of health issues and serious illnesses, both mental and physical. The cost of treating these issues can escalate quickly, creating a serious financial burden.
- Poor diets largely contribute to food-related public health issues, including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. This can result in higher health costs.

While some healthy food can be a little bit more expensive, the cost is still substantially less than treating medical conditions that come about from unhealthy eating.
